

NIH – Public Comments 2007- November 25th, 2007

After a successful teaching career of 25 years, it was all over as of November 2004 after experiencing intense burning of my face and students' faces in my classroom. The burning of our faces, eyes, ears, and necks, the itching skin, the breaking out of hives, and extreme fatigue caused me to file for workers comp. after three months of exposure. The last month I broke out in blisters on my hand after touching items on my desk and became chemically intolerant which plagues me today and has forced me into disability.

My son, in the building next door, was getting continual bloody noses, itchy skin, and got strep three times in a row. His symptoms were present in the building and went away on the weekends and vacations while in our home. He too has become extremely chemically intolerant and must be home schooled because of his hyper reactivity to molds and chemicals.

Four physicians refused to allow me to return to my building and my son's doctor asked for an accommodation. My risk manager was warned about the children reacting in my room and told me that the principal would have to decide whether or not to close the room. She never did. My son's school insisted that my son was safe even though one of his treating doctors and another private industrial hygienist warned of high mold counts based on the testing done in his room and auditorium.

The OSHA inspector kept promising me that he would do testing but he was not allowed to "destroy" property, had no instruments to test for moisture in the ceiling, or behind walls, and that he found nothing significant to report. Then he told me he was sorry but it was political. They tried to document things for another teacher in another sick building in another district and "got in trouble" for it. This is my protective agency?

My personal physician said I had MCS but wouldn't write it in the file. He told me I needed a toxicologist. The neuro toxicologist treating me documented satratoxins and benzene in my blood and diagnosed me with toxic encephalopathy, chronic fatigue, chemical intolerance, liver cysts, thyroid nodules. The pulmonologist diagnosed upper reactive airway disorder. The rheumatologist found abnormal ANA , and the QME told me that my illness was 100% work related. My toxicologist told me about a doctor in the East who might help us with our exposures. After extensive testing showing high inflammatory markers, both my son and I were diagnosed with sick building syndrome. His treatments helped a lot with the lung inflammation, joint pain, muscle weakness, but our eyes were still burning and sore without any improvement.

After consulting with several ophthalmologists in the West and trying more than 15 drops, they told me they were sorry but didn't know how mold illness played out in the eyes and referred my son and me to an infectious disease specialist who might help us with any undiagnosed viral, bacterial, or fungal issues.

I picked an infectious disease specialist at random near me because I was so tired of traveling so far to find doctors who knew mold/chemical exposures and who would actually put the diagnosis in writing and knew how to treat the illness.

Unfortunately the infectious disease specialist looked at our medical tests and history post exposure and called it crap, told me I was bipolar after a brief 15 min. visit and turned us into CPS for some psychotic disorder she remembered from medical school. Since that day it has been a hellish journey. We have been traumatized by this event and are still dealing with its complications

For six months, not only did I have to deal with my disability, my son's deteriorating health, but then I had to locate legal help to defend me from some bogus allegations of abuse and neglect for believing what my doctors who did know mold exposures told me about our health. I was denied the representation I chose, my son was denied the representation he chose, my medical documentation was not allowed on the record and jurisdiction was taken in Los Angeles Children's court even though we had moved to another county in northern CA. None of my documentation was accepted when I submitted it to the court in Los Angeles or in Sacramento, nor was the letter from a social worker in Sacramento stating the allegations were totally false.

Recently my appeals lawyer wrote a wonderful brief and has forced CPS to agree to a reversal of the original decision but I am still on a child abuse list for ten years! Why? Because I was told to take my son to an infectious disease doctor to see if we had any hidden viral, bacterial, or fungal issues. I have been told that I need yet another lawyer to deal with this index.

I have been disabled for three years without my day in workers comp. court. My COBRA benefits are finished. I have no health insurance. MediCAL has denied me, HealthyFamilies has denied me, and Social Security has denied my application. After twenty five years of being a public servant, serving two hundred children a day, I have nothing. My career is finished, no health care, no care for my son, and more legal fights. Why? Because my son and I have been exposed to environmental toxins. No parent in this country should have to endure this again! As leaders in the medical realm, you must do whatever possible to assure that this stops and accurate medical treatment is available for any child who walks into their pediatrician's office, and that no parent is harassed for bringing up the word mold or chemical exposure.

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